

TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

established 1904.

BULLETIN

<http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/tasfield.html>

Editor : Don Hird. (email dgh@dodo.com.au)

Bulletin No. 314 (quarterly)

April 2004

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal *The Tasmanian Naturalist* annually in October. People with a range of ages, background and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Genevieve Gates (6227 8638) for further information or write to GPO Box 68A, Hobart, 7001.

Programme

General Meetings start at 7.45 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month, in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting outside the to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery entrance in Macquarie Street. Bring lunch and all-weather outdoor gear.

If you are planning to attend an outing but have not been to the prior meeting, phone to check as to the timing of the excursion (with Genevieve Gates; 62 278 638 or Don Hird; 62 289 702). Unforeseen changes sometimes occur.

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| Thurs. 6 May | <u>7.45p.m.</u> : Our President Genevieve Gates will revive an old club tradition by speaking about our extended Easter Camp 2004 on Tasman Peninsula. |
| Sunday 9 May
excursion | <u>9.00a.m.</u> Depart from the Museum for Bruny Island and on to Quarantine Peninsula. This is an area of formerly Commonwealth-owned bushland which, partly at our instigation, is being formally reserved. The peninsula is dry sclerophyll coastal woodland. |
| Thurs. 3 June | <u>7.45p.m.</u> : Peter McQuillan will talk about <i>Moths and their relationship to plants</i> . |
| Sat. 5 OR Sunday 6
June excursion | <u>10.00a.m.</u> This will be to a nearby location, possibly Waterworks or Cascades Reserve. Day will depend on prospective weather and member preferences. |
| Thurs. 1 July | <u>7.45p.m.</u> : David Leaman will talk on <i>Some insights into Tasmania's Water Problems</i> . |
| Sat. 3 OR Sunday 4
July excursion | <u>10.00a.m.</u> TBA. |
| Thurs. 5 August | <u>7.45p.m.</u> : Sarah Monks will talk on – <i>The Ecology of the Platypus in Tasmania</i> . |

From the Treasurer:
yet for 2004 you will find a red "X" on the top LH corner of your Bulletin envelope. Any queries please phone Anna on 62396326 or email on

A reminder that subs were due at the beginning of January. If you haven't paid
Anna.McEldowney@utas.edu.au

Holding Permits for Natural History Specimens or Objects

State legislation now requires these where such objects are for educational and display purposes.

Please note the following, in preparation for the Plants Australia Flower Show later this year, and for future displays.

Holding Permits for Natural History Specimens

Dear Club Members,

We have to apply as a club to Parks and Wildlife for a "holding permit" for educational and display purposes. This means we need a list of all items of Natural History which you would bring along to use at the flower show in October of this year.

Introduced fauna, shark egg cases and shells are exempt from this inventory. However any bits of whales, Aboriginal relics or threatened species need to be dealt with independently under the Whale Protection Act 1988, Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 and the Aboriginal Relics Act 1975.

Also, any fossils in your collections will need to be assessed by Mike Pemberton, the senior Earth Scientist. So we may leave these out of the display but any skulls, birds' nests etc. need to be included in the inventory so we can get a permit.

Because this is an ongoing requirement, anybody with natural history objects other than in the exempt or special categories should list them, *even if not intended for display at the Flower Show*.

Could you please bring your list to the next meeting or post it to me at Box 68, GPO Hobart, 7001,

Thank you,
Genevieve Gates(President)

Excursion Reports

Outing to Hartz Mountains, February 2004

Kevin Bonham.

About 14 Field Nats attended the year's first outing. Despite days of heavy rain leading up to the outing the day itself was fine and pleasant. Most of the Longley contingent headed for Hartz Peak while the remainder of us did three short walks - Lake Osbourne, Arve Falls and a forage around the start of the old Hartz Peak track and the demolished remains of the old Hartz Hut.

The Lake Osbourne walk is very easy and has been upgraded to a very high standard as one of Tasmania's "60 great short walks". The track passes through short subalpine rainforest (including King Billy pines) and subalpine eucalypt scrub, with patches of open sedgeland and moorland. One of these patches is dotted with several "roche moutonee" - rugged glacial rock formations formed by glaciers flowing over them. The lake itself is fringed with small pencil pine. Along the way we saw some impressive *Milligania* in flower, as well as a single specimen of *Prasophyllum alpinum* (a common high-altitude leek orchid). The burnt remnants of the old Hartz Hut contained numerous fungi, the snail *Caryodes dufresnii* (this species is attracted to charcoal), and a reddish alpine huntsman-like spider. A large wolf spider was seen nearby sitting on top of an ant nest. We wondered if it had been feeding.

On the Arve Falls track a snake was seen going under an obstacle shortly before a lizard emerged from the other side prompting the comment "It's gone in a snake and come out a lizard!" Also on this track a nice stag beetle was found, but it proved to be the common *Lissotes obtusatus*. Genevieve and David compiled a reasonable fungus list for the conditions.

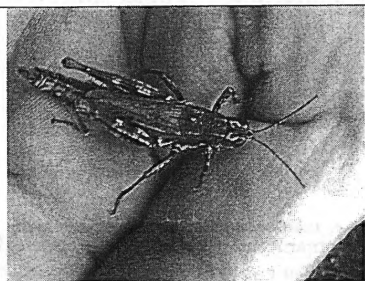
I had never thought of the Hartz as all that good a snail locality, but on the Lake Osbourne walk I decided to quickly search around one of the roche moutonee formations and was very surprised to find the semi-slug pictured. This is, at least, a new genus - one totally unlike anything else known in Tasmania, and which has not yet been placed to family. The shell is 5 mm long and the animal at full stretch is 18 mm. Unfortunately I found only one specimen, and two searches since have yielded nothing but four eggs thought to probably be of this species. The full snail list for the day was: *Roblinella* sp. "Tahune"*, *Stenacapha vitrinaformis*, *Pernagera kingstonensis*, *Roblinella curacaoe**, *Planilaoma luckmanii*, Semi-slug "Lake Osbourne"*, *Caryodes dufresnii* and *Allocharopa legrandi** (southern white form).

Species marked * are new records for the Hartz.

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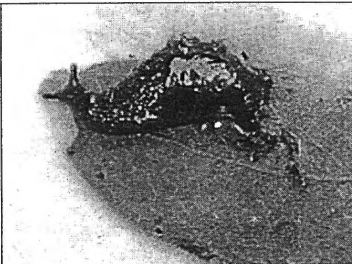
On one of the return searches I found three specimens of what turned out to be a new *Pernagera* species. This had been collected in the Hartz before, but previous material wasn't good enough to determine if it was a species. Ironically, the first specimen of this new *Pernagera* may have been a juvenile snail I saw on my first ever Field Nats outing, way back on May 9, 1987.

It was also a very good trip for millipedes. My samples included one specimen of a very rare undescribed small white knobly millipede resembling the genus *Asphalidesmus* and previously known only from two records (one from the southern caves, one from Warra) and specimens of an unclear and possibly new medium-sized reddish-brown form similar to the common *Tasmaniosoma armatum*.



Mountain Grasshopper

Photo SeungAh Yi



New species of Semi-Slug

(photo: David Ratkowsky)

Outing to Mount Wedge, March 2004

Don Hird.

Sunday March 7th an overcast day in Hobart followed a deluge on the previous day. The long weekend may have also contributed to the small turnout of 8 heading for Mt Wedge in the middle of the readily accessible southwest.

Heading west the weather appeared finer, although misty cloud persisted around the tops. On reaching the Forest Reserve where the track to the mountain continues from a nature walk in the rainforest, we decided to again divide into montane and lowland/fungal (lowlife ?!) groups for the day's excursion.

Leaving the nature trail the track steepens, heading through Myrtle / tall stringybark rainforest. Before long tall *Melaleuca squarrose* scrub succeeds the Myrtle, Mountain Pepper and Native Laurel rainforest. The geology also changes from a mudstone to dolerite substrate. Shrubs including Mountain rocket, Snow Berry, *Lomatia polymorpha*, *Orites revoluta*, *Tetracarpea tasmanica*, and Pandani dominate as the alpine vegetation zone is approached. A feature here was , Celerytop Pine in flower; female flower red/pink and fleshy, and the mature plants two metres high and wide with conical symmetry. *Rubus gunnianus* *Pimelia sericea*, and *Billardiera longiflora* (Mountain Blue Berry) were also prominent. Amongst the crags and many false peaks were gentians a yellow daisy (*Senecia pectinatus*) and low spreading myrtles in an alpine hermland.

Fungi seen by the mountain climbers in the rainforest were white jelly fungus, *Amanita* sp. and a turquoise fungus on the 'green' wood.

Birds- Lyrebird scratchings, confirmed by Anna's feather; Scarlet Robin, Scrubwren and Bronzewing (heard) were noted.

While lunching Isabella stalked a mountain skink which then audaciously bit her finger. Two *Antechinus*, probably *A. swainsonii* were seen amongst the summit boulder field.,

Views of the surroundings were evidently magnificent but it was one of those frequent days in the southwest when the mists cling in dribs and drabs for most of the day but in snatches enable tantalising glimpses of the Mt Anne massif, the Gordon Dam and logged areas.

A snail found low on the track was identified by Kevin Bonham as *Stenocapha vitrinaformis*. On the mountain proper the Butterfly *Vanessa kershawi*, the Australian Painted Lady and also a small brown which Amanda thought to be the Mountain Blue or *Neolucia hobartensis*. Cicadas (brown ones) were also spotted above the tree line.

Slightly divergent from natural history was a discussion of pharmaceutical or other remedies for the results of rigorous downhill bushwalks on knees, legs, feet and etc, at least for us post teenage fieldnats !

The T.F.N.C. Easter Camp at Koonya, April 9-13th.

"A life so near to Nature, all at one with bird and plant and beast,
and swimming thing" Edward Carpenter.

Good Friday, 2004, saw the biggest gathering of the T.F.N.C. for many an excursion. The damp locks and bleary eyes were indicative of the enthusiasm for the 9am start to Bangor, the Dunbabin property at Dunalley. By the time we had reached Bangor, had a footy match, collected the keys to unlock all the open gates we had lost one car and acquired a dog. The lost car finally turned up (thank you Gilbert for going back to find Pam and Mary) and we were able to drive on to Lagoon Bay for the group photo of this historical outing. After much regrouping of this bunch of overexcited Field Naturalists we had to do a retake when Gilbert sauntered into view. A quick dispersal into fast, slow and very slow groups and we were afield. The "fasts" galloped off to Tasman's Monument, the "slows" meandered to Cape Frederick Hendrick, taking Gypsy, that great canine footballer with them and the "very slows" beachcombed the sandy beaches. After a wonderful day, the unfortunates who had to return to Hobart departed and the rest of us proceeded to Tasman House, the University Field Station at Koonya.

The curse of McGregor's was making its presence felt as early as 8.30 am on Saturday morning. Geoff was repeatedly trying to point out that we were intent on taking the wrong road to the start of the climb to McGregor's Peak. This was awkward as we were meeting Robyn, George and Zoe there at 9.30 am. Fortunately, they had followed the correct instructions to the wrong road perfectly and were on time so we could all go together to the Forestier Forest Reserve Road (the right road). After a fair bit of up-hill exertion and much botanical discussion all 22 of us reached the beautiful rainforest at the peak and regrouped for lunch (and No. 19 was with us). After the usual fall out into "fasts" and "slows" we continued on, the rear party consisting of snail and fungi seekers and No.19, a ring-in from the mammal survey group. All was well, numerous and fascinating species of fungi were bursting out impressing our overseas visitors as was the interesting flora, the warm sunshine and the stunning views. Then without warning, the curse of McGregor's struck again. Not really? Yes, I didn't do it deliberately!

The president had charged off to add to the fungi list whilst the photographers were at the scenic viewpoint. Luckily (for her), she stopped to wait for them to catch her up. After a very, very lengthy wait and puzzling about why they were taking so long she heard Warwick calling "Genevieve, you are on the wrong track". "No I am not, it's a proper track with tapes and triangles". "Yes, but you are going back the way we came!" Oh, boy, wondering how she was going to live this one down they rejoined the worried group..... "Thank goodness she's been found" or was it "it's a pity she's been found?"

Surely we would get out of this place now without further mishap but this was not to be.

"What a lovely Cortinarius, I must take a photo!.....Oh no, David I have lost the digital camera." The air was thick with unspoken "I told you sos". This time the gods were with us as sharp-eyed Warwick had rescued it caught on a branch but didn't let on, just biding his time to watch the fun and games (lots of

brownie points to Warwick). Only one further minor accident occurred when Machiel put his foot in a tangle of roots and went for a short trip — easy to do on the steep descent. Aren't the cars a welcome sight at the end of this long but rewarding walk?

The Saturday night activities were preceded by Marc's football clinic for girls and rugby players and after a jolly B-B-Q held in the warm (weak) glow of the head torches we sat around the fire to discuss Club business i.e. a name for the History book. Suggestions were coming thick and fast, the level of the wine cask was dropping and the double entendres were becoming very cryptic.

"Scratching the Surface" followed by *"From Nits to Nats"* had us squirming in our seats. *"Affairs A field"* made me view the tenting parties with much suspicion especially as No. 19 was among them and he likes *"Doing it Naturally"* (as does Julia) and has *"Hankerings for Nature"*. By this stage I was not at all surprised by *"A century of Field Affairs"*. Anna, was *"Not yet out of the Car park"* whilst Robert, 100 years on was *"Still in the car park"*. Have we all got *"Kangaroos in the Top Paddock?"*. *"A Threatened Species"*, that's us, or are we rather *"Close to Extinction"*, going *"At a snail's pace"*, leaving *"No stone Unturned"*, seeing *"A Cloud of Butterflies"*, having a *"Paws for Thought"*, eating *"Pepper in the Porridge"*, crossing *"The Fertile Field"* (Anna has been brainwashed by years of Agriculture), leaving *"Footprints in Nature"* whilst viewing *"Nature through the Hand Lens"*, answering *"Calls of Nature"* after finding *"Places to Go"*, *"On the Nature Trail"* and I think the police would have been very interested in *"The Naturalist Exposed"* with *"Nature at hand"* all *"In the Quest for Knowledge"*, after all, *"In Our Nature"*. The well of creativity was dry, along with the wine cask; I staggered hysterically off to bed thinking, *"Naturalists have a one track mind"*. Now, how's that for a title?

We woke to steady rain on Easter Sunday, just the excuse we needed to lie in bed whilst the Easter Pademelons did their thing before Marc and Nicole were ready for action. After a lazy morning, the chocolate took effect and the T.F.N.C. was fired up enough to go to Roaring and Slop Main Beaches. The mycological sector decided that no visit to Tasmanian forests was complete without an introduction to leeches so we led our unsuspecting visitors along Plummer's Creek at Clark's cliffs. I think Seung-Ah collected a record of 11 leeches, well done Seung-Ah! A busy evening was spent at the microscopes looking at shells, shark eggs and botanical specimens from the day's outing.

Monday dawned a beautiful day, David took Machiel and Delia on a Cook's Tour of Eaglehawk Neck and the rest of us were going to Remarkable Cave, the start of our Mt Brown walk as a salute to the T.F.N.C's Jubilee Camp in 1954. We were heading for Port Arthur when a Jewel beetle green Volvo flashed by with a familiar frazzled woman at the wheel. "It's Amanda" I yelled, and we stopped for a pow-wow on how to sort this crisis. Clever Isabella had recognized Don's car so they had turned around to join the convoy.

The trip across the heath with its pretty flowering plants was uneventful until I saw Qug and her copepod net disappearing down the Maingon Blowhole. It was only an illusion as she had found a puddle a few metres clear of the entrance of this heart stopper. The warm weather and sparkling waters enticed the hardy to go swimming and snorkeling after the short but steep climb up Mt Brown. Charles, Isabella and Marc disappeared up the sand dunes only to emerge in a flurry of arms and legs as they tumbled and rolled back down the dunes. Monday night was spent again at the microscopes or doing in depth write ups of each day's activities along with botanical, zoological and fungi lists that will be in the Naturalist later in the year.

We left Koonya on Tuesday morning. The clean up crew did a great job, Amanda drew the short straw and had to take the garbage (thanks Amanda) but no one else had any room...we were thinking we might have to dismember Kevin to fit him in. Thanks to Geoff for his great navigational skills and panache when swinging the billy. Our visitors had a very entertaining time and will take back with them to The Netherlands many memories of our wonderful forests and of Australians var tasmaniensis. I hope everybody enjoyed their stay, the success of these camps depends on us, the Club Members, so thank you for coming and contributing. One day we may even have another! All those in favour.....

By Genevieve Gates (President of the T.F.N.C.)

P.S. some serious suggestions for a title

Neil suggested "A Century Afield --- The Tasmanian Field Naturalist Club 1904-2004", it's a bit reminiscent of a cricket team but is dignified, and appropriate and squeaky clean.

David suggested "Field Naturalists---A Threatened Species" which is clever but maybe a bit narrow and not very optimistic.

Isabella suggested "Bushbuffs" which is cute and quirky however if you are running around in the buff? I even had a few secret admirers for "Pepper in the Porridge" which is taken from Marjorie's account of one of the camp outs.

Michael Sharland wrote a book based on his newspaper column called a "Pocketful of Nature" and more recently, Don Knowler has done the same thing but his book is called "Dancing on the Edge of the World". This is just for you to compare two completely unrelated titles to two very similar books. Have we any more suggestions?

A disappointing aspect of the visit to Slopem Main was motorbikes roaring along the beach. Tasmania, "The Natural State" still sanctions this primeval behaviour.

Don Hird

Have you heard about the Tasmanian Environment Centre? Have you heard about our library? Find out how we can help you!

The Environment Resource Library is a comprehensive collection of resource materials covering a wide range of subjects from plant identification and weeding, to safe paints and grey-water recycling.

The collection is housed in the Tasmanian Environment Centre, whose purpose is to promote "solutions for sustainable communities".

We would like to know how we can help you with your environmental information needs. Requests via phone, fax, email and post are welcome. phone (03) 6234 5566 fax (03) 6234 5543 email restec@southcom.com.au website <http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/tec> : open Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm 102 Bathurst Street, Hobart 7000
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1080 poison use is a controversial issue in Tasmania. A new website has been developed by the Browsing Damage Management Group (an Agricultural Research and Advisory Committee constituted under terms of reference of the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research). This on-line resource is for anybody looking for information about 1080 poison, it's alternatives and what research is being done. It provides data on quantities used, copies of official reports, and links to other sites in Tasmania, Australia and New Zealand. It was created by Andrew Walsh at Forestry Tasmania, who is extremely busy trying to find ways to grow trees without 1080, but often receives requests for information about his work. The URL is www.browsingdamage.org.au.